

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the application:

### **Listing of claims:**

1. (currently amended) A system useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel including a first leg, a second leg, a third leg, and a platform coupled to the first, second, and third legs such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the first, second and third legs using pinions driven by one or more motors, the system comprising:

a first brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the first brace, the first brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

the first brace being coupled at a second location along the first brace to a winch driven by a winch motor capable of tensioning the first brace, the first and second locations along the first brace defining a first brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the first brace length is located directly beneath the platform, and the winch motor is synchronized with the one or more motors such that tension in the first brace is maintained with the winch while raising or lowering the platform.

2. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first brace is coupled to the first leg through a first footing structure located between the first brace and the first leg, the first footing structure being coupled to one end of the first leg.

3. (original) The system of claim 2, wherein the first leg has at least one opening near the end to which the footing structure is coupled, and further comprising a pin having an axis, the pin positioned within the opening such that the first leg may rotate about the axis.

4. (original) The system of claim 2, wherein the first footing structure includes one or more protrusions defining space into which material from a floor beneath a body of water collects when the footing structure contacts the floor.

5-8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) A system useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel including a first leg, a second leg, a third leg, and a platform coupled to the first, second, and third legs such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the first, second and third legs, the system comprising:

a first brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the first brace, the first brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the first brace at a second location along the first brace, the first and second locations along the first brace defining a first brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the first brace length is located directly beneath the platform, one or more racks are secured to the first leg, and the anchoring structure includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring having a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.

10. (previously presented) A system useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel including a first leg, a second leg, a third leg, and a platform coupled to the first, second, and third legs such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the first, second and third legs, the system comprising:

a rigid first brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the rigid first brace, the rigid first brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the rigid first brace at a second location along the rigid first brace, the first and second locations along the rigid first brace defining a first brace length between them;  
wherein at least a portion of the rigid first brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

11. (canceled)

12. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein the first brace comprises multiple loops that are linked together or wire rope.

13. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a second brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the second brace, the second brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and  
an anchoring structure coupled to the second brace at a second location along the second brace, the first and second locations along the second brace defining a second brace length between them;  
wherein at least a portion of the second brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

14. (canceled)

15. (previously presented) The system of claim 13, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the first leg at a first location along the third brace, the third brace forming an acute angle with the first leg; and  
an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

16. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the anchoring structures coupled to the second and third braces are the same anchoring structure.

17. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a second brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the second brace, the

second brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the second brace at a second location along the second

brace, the first and second locations along the second brace defining a second

brace length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the second brace length is located directly beneath the

platform.

18. (original) The system of claim 17, wherein the second brace is coupled to the second leg through a second footing structure located between the second brace and the second leg, the second footing structure being coupled to one end of the second leg.

19. (previously presented) The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the second leg at a first location along the third brace, the third

brace forming an acute angle with the second leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third

brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace

length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

20. (original) The system of claim 19, wherein the anchoring structures coupled to the second and third braces are the same anchoring structure.

21. (canceled)

22. (previously presented) The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a third brace coupled to the third leg at a first location along the third brace, the third

brace forming an acute angle with the third leg; and

an anchoring structure coupled to the third brace at a second location along the third

brace, the first and second locations along the third brace defining a third brace

length between them;

wherein at least a portion of the third brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

23. (original) The system of claim 22, wherein the third brace is coupled to the third leg through a third footing structure located between the third brace and the third leg, the third footing structure being coupled to one end of the third leg.

24-39. (canceled)

40. (previously presented) A vessel comprising:

a platform;

three legs coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along

the three legs;

a flexible brace coupled to each of the three legs at a first location along each flexible

brace, each flexible brace forming an acute angle with its respective leg;

an anchoring structure coupled to each flexible brace at a second location along each

flexible brace, the first and second locations along each flexible brace defining a

flexible brace length between them, at least one anchoring structure being capable

of achieving 40,000 pounds of tension in the flexible brace to which it is coupled;

wherein at least a portion of each flexible brace length is located directly beneath the platform.

41. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the flexible braces is coupled to its respective leg through a footing structure located between that flexible brace and the respective leg, the footing structure being coupled to one end of the respective leg.

42. (original) The vessel of claim 41, wherein the footing structure includes one or more protrusions defining space into which material from a floor beneath a body of water collects when the footing structure contacts the floor.

43. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein the anchoring structures to which the flexible braces are coupled are the same anchoring structure.

44. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes a winch.

45. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes the platform.

46. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein one or more racks are secured to at least one of the three legs, and wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.

47. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein one or more racks are secured to at least one of the three legs, and wherein at least one of the anchoring structures includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring having a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks.

48. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three flexible braces comprises multiple loops that are linked together.

49. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three flexible braces comprises wire rope.

50. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three legs comprises a metal cylinder.

51. (original) The vessel of claim 40, wherein at least one of the three legs comprises multiple trusses.

52-53. (canceled)

54. (currently amended) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform and three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs using pinions driven by one or more motors, the method comprising:

coupling a first brace to one of the legs;

orienting the first brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled;

positioning at least a portion of the first brace directly beneath the platform;

coupling the first brace to a winch driven by a winch motor; and

synchronizing the winch motor with the one or more motors such that tension in the first brace is maintained at the winch while raising or lowering the platform.

55. (previously presented) The method of claim 54, wherein the coupling a first brace to one of the legs includes coupling the first brace to one of the legs through a footing structure located between the first brace and the one leg.

56-60. (canceled)

61. (previously presented) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform, three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs, and one or more racks secured to one of the legs, the method comprising:

coupling a first brace to one of the legs and an anchoring structure such that at least a portion of the first brace is positioned directly beneath the platform and the first brace is oriented at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled;  
where the anchoring structure includes a ring coupled to the platform, the ring has a holding rack configured to engage one of the one or more racks, and the first brace is coupled to the ring.

62-65. (canceled)

66. (previously presented) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform and three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs, the method comprising:

coupling a first brace to one of the legs;  
orienting the first brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled;  
positioning at least a portion of the first brace directly beneath the platform; and  
lifting a leg that horizontally shifts in order to restore an earlier position of the leg.

67. (previously presented) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform and three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs, the method comprising:

coupling a first brace to one of the legs;  
orienting the first brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled; and  
positioning at least a portion of the first brace directly beneath the platform;  
wherein the first brace is rigid.

68. (original) The method of claim 67, further comprising:  
rotating the first brace; and



coupling the first brace to an anchoring structure using at least a pin.

69. (canceled)

70. (previously presented) The method of claim 54, further comprising:

coupling a second brace to one of the other two legs;

orienting the second brace at an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled; and

positioning at least a portion of the second brace directly beneath the platform.

71. (previously presented) The method of claim 70, further comprising:

coupling a third brace to the third leg;

orienting the third brace at an acute angle with the third; and

positioning at least a portion of the third brace directly beneath the platform.

72-83. (canceled)

84. (previously presented) A vessel comprising:

a platform;

three legs coupled to the platform such that the platform may be raised or lowered along

the three legs;

a footing structure coupled to an end of one of the legs; and

a flexible brace coupled at two different locations to the leg with the footing structure, the

flexible brace forming an acute angle with that leg, and one of the two locations

being on the footing structure.

85. (currently amended) A system useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel including a first leg, a second leg, a third leg, and a platform coupled to the first, second, and third legs such that the platform may be raised or lowered along the first, second and third legs, the system comprising:

a brace coupled to each leg such that each brace forms an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled and a least a portion of each brace is located directly beneath the platform; and

an anchoring structure coupled to each brace, each anchoring structure being configured to ~~apply~~ tension to the brace to which it is coupled such that each brace can be tensioned independently of the other braces.

86. (currently amended) A method useful in stabilizing a vessel, the vessel having a platform and three or more legs coupled to the platform such that platform may be raised or lowered along the legs, the method comprising:

coupling a brace to each leg such that each brace forms an acute angle with the leg to which it is coupled and a least a portion of each brace is located directly beneath the platform; and

coupling each brace to an anchoring structure that is configured to ~~apply~~ tension to the brace to which it is coupled such that each brace can be tensioned independently of the other braces.